

Susquehannock Trail Club News – 01-12-2023

By Bill Boyd

For those who like statistics, here are a few relating to the STS. This may provide an inkling as to what all is involved in trail maintenance. The club members logged 2433 hours for 2022 - this involved many aspects of trail care, including, but not limited to, chainsawing (removing blowdowns), brushcutting (mainly nettles, small beech brush and briars), the usual weedwacking, lots of limb lopping, blazing, sidehill trail leveling (benching), some water diversion, various new and replacement signs, trail mowing (with walk-behind mower), some new log bridges (using an Alaskan Mill to flatten a log), mapping and clearing some neglected trails to provide some more loop hikes, building our 7th trail shelter at Bolich Run, kiosk maintenance, not to mention plenty of time managing our website and Facebook page (which unfortunately are not counted as trail maintenance).

This 2433-hour total ranks 2nd, after our high of 3023 hours logged in 2020. We call that our "covid year", and we speculated that many chose to spend time on the trails where they felt relatively safe from the virus. Our 15-year average is 1659 hours, so we have far exceeded that for the last three years. This work was done by anywhere from 40 to 90 volunteers (with 15-yr. avg. of 52).

We have already begun making plans for 2023, with two main goals in mind - attracting some younger members (hopefully a couple of new maintainers), and some new trail tools. Although we feel that we are doing a really good job of keeping the STS in decent condition, we realize that there are some inconsistencies in some areas. Since I joined the club over 20 years ago, I have seen some remarkable improvements in trail care, and it shows in the condition of the trails. But some of us are nearing that dreaded "end of trail" time and can no longer do what we could 10 or 20 years ago. Somehow we manage to do some of the work, but at a slower pace - which is fine, as we feel everyone should slow down just a bit. We're convinced that the more time you spend in the outdoors the better you are going to feel.

So, here's to a better STC/STS for 2023.